



State of Connecticut

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Spring-Summer 2002

Latino & Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

Committed to coordinating and providing access to resources...

for the advancement of the Latino & Puerto Rican communities

Message from the Chairperson, Carlos Vázquez

NEWSLETTER



Dear Friends of LPRAC:

Welcome to our combined second and third issue of the newsletter for this calendar year. This has been yet another outstanding year for the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission. We held a

number of conferences and workshops that were very successful. As a matter of fact, I was honored to speak at our first Latinos Breaking Barriers Conference held in May 2002 at the Ramada Inn in Meriden. The conference was a huge success so much so

that we ended up with over 50 additional individuals than what had been planned for originally. The keynote speaker, Mr. Hiram Zayas, an individual living with disabilities and known internationally for his advocacy on behalf of those afflicted with a disability, was outstanding and put many of us who are able bodied to shame.

In addition to this conference, we also held a very successful workshop in June on immigrant and refugee women in collaboration with the Federal Department of Labor's Women's Bureau. Again we surpassed the numbers we originally planned to service and the agency has asked that we plan a follow up session

targeted for the end of November 2002. Agency staff continues collaborating with organizations such as Leadership Greater Hartford and it's Latino Leadership Development Network adhoc committee to organize the upcoming Latino Leadership Summit to be held in December. Our agency has also taken the lead in coordinating the first Latino Summit on HIV/AIDS to be held in November.

We have completed the work towards our third socio economic study and it will soon be ready for distribution once it has gone out to print. Once this occurs, we will schedule a press con-

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State Boards and Commissions Forum

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission in conjunction with the African American Affairs Commission, the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and DemocracyWorks will be holding two forums regarding Diversity on State Boards and Commissions. The first one will be held at the New Haven City Hall, 165 Church Street on Wednesday, October 23, 2002 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The second forum will be held in Hartford at the State Capitol's Old Judiciary Room on Thursday, November 14, 2002. If you are interested in serving on a State Board or Commission, please contact any one of the staff members of the various commissions for information on how to go about submitting your name for consideration. The staffpersons are as follows: Lucy Goicoechea-Hernández, Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commis-

sion - 860-240-8330; Cheryl Harris Forbes, African American Affairs Commission - 860-240-8555 and Barbara Potopowitz of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women - 860-240-8300. The other two partners on

this project are Joyce Hamilton of DemocracyWorks and Shannon Perry of the National Conference for Community and Justice. The project is working on the development of a speakers bureau and corporate board appointments.

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Message from Executive Director, Fernando Betancourt



Dear Friends:

Welcome to the combined seconde and third issue of the newsletter for 2002. I would like to take this time to thank each and every one of you who has made this such an outstanding year for the

Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission. We have participated in numerous events and activities throughout the year, some of which, have surpassed our expectations. We are particularly proud of the first Latinos Breaking Barriers conference held in collaboration with a number of other state agencies including the Department of Social Services' Bureau of Rehabilitation Service, the Office of Protection and Advocacy and the Department of Mental Retardation and two outside agencies-Padres Abriendo Puertas and the Hartford Association for Retarded Citizens. This conference was so successful that we attracted 300 individuals as opposed to the 250 we had planned to service.

We collaborated in the preparation of a youth leadership institute held by Manchester Community College and Central Connecticut State University in March where I had an opportunity to address the youth in the audience. The event was well-attended and there over 75 Latino youth present at that event. It was very satisfying for me to see the enthusiasm on the student's faces as I spoke about the ways in which the Latino community has

contributed to this society. It was heartwarming to see how they hung on my every word and I was totally thrilled when they gave me a standing ovation. We also held a workshop for immigrant and refugee women on June 12th in collaboration with the Federal Department of Labor Women's Bureau which was also well-attended. It was so successful that we are planning a follow up workshop for November. I have been asked to speak at numerous presentations at various organizations, colleges and universities on a variety of topics including the census figures and what those represent for the Latino community on a state and national level, affirmative action and the impact Latinos are having on society on a local, statewide and national level.

We have also developed the third Socio Economic Study and will hold a press conference to release the findings once the printing of the document has been completed. We have included information gathered on youths and teen risk behaviors this time around. LPRAC has also revamped its brochure and folders and distribute these materials at all the events we attend weekly. Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs staff is also collaborating with the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs on voter registration. We have been approached by the Chief State's Attorney's Office to participate on a Hate Crimes Advisory Task Force. In addition, Judge Carmen Lopez in collaboration with the judicial branch has invited us to participate on a Juvenile Justice Advisory Task force as well.

I would also like to take this time to congratulate one of our new Commissioners, Officer Hector Robles, who was recently selected to represent Connecticut at a Commu-

IMPORTANT DATE TO REMEMBER

COMMISSION MEETINGS

ARE HELD EVERY THIRD WEDNESDAY

OF EACH MONTH AT THE

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, SUITE 2600

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

5:30 PM -- 8:00 PM

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IS ENCOURAGED

Abie Quiñones-Benitez - Education Consultant

By Lucy Goicoechea-Hernández

Ms. Abie Quiñones-Benitez is a Curriculum, Staff Developer and Language Acquisition Consultant from the New Haven area. Last year, she completed her Ph. D. at the University of Connecticut. Her dissertation centered around professional development to promote collaboration among mainstream and bilingual teachers. She submitted her dissertation for competition to the American Educational Research Association, Bilingual Special Interest Group (a prestigious professional forum). She won first place. In addition, the Senate of Puerto Rico recognized her for this accomplishment.

She has worked in Connecticut since 1984. As an educator, she has serviced inner-city families including Latinos as a guidance counselor, curriculum and staff devel-

oper and as a second language acquisition consultant. In addition, she has served as an officer on many boards and has been one of the incorporating officers both for LULAC's Head Start and Hispanos Unidos contra SIDA of New Haven.

She was born in Puerto Rico and graduated from its public school system. She completed her Bachelor's Degree at the University of Puerto Rico in Rio Piedras. She moved to Pittsburgh to attend graduate school and completed a Masters degree at the University of Pittsburgh. While there, she founded a Latino Student Association and participated in many activities that promoted Latino culture awareness among anglo students.

Once in Connecticut, she decided to work with grassroots activities

and organizations supporting educational and social development among Latinos. Her work with teachers has been focused on the need to promote best educational practices that impact the development of Latino and non-Latino inner-city students.

Puerto Rico's Senate recognized Dr. Benitez for having won the American Educational Research Association's Bilingual Special Group competition.

Last year, she completed her Ph. D. at the University of Connecticut.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The **Department of Children and Families** their Children's Protective Services Division is currently looking for a **Program Supervisor - Social Work**. There is no closing date for this vacancy and the salary range is \$60,917 to \$78,138. Please visit the website at <http://www.das.state.ct.us/exam/ExamDocs> for a full description of the position.

The **State Department of Public Safety** is looking for a **Public Safety Dispatcher Trainee**. The salary range for this position is \$31,912 to \$36,636. If you are interested in this position, please visit the website at <http://www.das.state.ct.us/exam/ExamDocs>. The deadline for application is December 31, 2002

The **State Department of Labor, Employment Security Appeals Division** is currently recruiting for an **Employment Security Appeals Referee**. The salary range is \$55,226 to \$70,004. The deadline for application is October 22, 2002. For additional information or to download the job description, please visit the website at <http://www.das.state.ct.us/exam/ExamDocs>.

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission maintains a bulletin board with postings received from State and community agencies. Feel free to contact Tersee Flores, Legislative Secretary at 860-240-8330 to learn more.

Latinos Step Forward in City

By Tedman Martínez

One tenet of political theory maintains that politics is the authoritative dissemination of values. With the election of Angel Vazquez and Elizabeth Garcia-Gonzalez, the city administration took on an ethnic tone hitherto unseen – a potential affirmation of those values that have galvanized the Latino electorate in the recent city elections.

For the first time in the history of New London, two Latinos occupy seats on the City Council and Board of Education respectively. At the swearing-in ceremony, the Latino community – along with representatives of the governor of Puerto Rico – acknowledged a new beginning and expressed its approval with resounding applause and cheers.

The combined victories are a tribute to several key members in our community. Mr. Vazquez and Mrs. Garcia-Gonzalez need to be commended for accepting the challenge of running for elective office without prior experience and persevering to the end. It was a daunting task indeed. The months of preparation and long hours spent working the campaign trail are testaments to their dedication and commitment to New London.

The Latino community also recognizes the leadership of Anthony Basilia, chairman of the Democratic Town Committee, whose guidance and support were invaluable. The other Democratic candidates also supported them, as did the leaders of the Republican Party, which endorsed Comité Politico Comunal members, Bill Morse and Sergio Camacho.

Ultimately, the Latino community came together to assert its position

as a legitimate player in the political arena. Their collective voice was heard loud and clear on Nov. 6, and their contribution to the political races were decisive. Mr. Vazquez and Mrs. Garcia-Gonzalez will be called upon to work hand in hand with their colleagues to respond to the needs of all New Londoners. In doing so, they will advance a set of values that ignited their desire to run for elective office and invigorate our Latino youth to pursue similar avenues of community service. Our youth need to identify themselves as integral members of our community and contribute meaningfully towards its growth as Mr. Vazquez and Mrs. Garcia-Gonzalez have.

To this end, CPC will align its educational programs to foster a heightened awareness of our community's development and identify future Latino leaders who share in a common vision for New London.

TOASTMASTERS CLUB

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission's Toastmasters Club meets twice per month at the Legislative Office Building. Since two of its members received awards this past spring, the club has been drawing more and more membership. They have established and continue to provide a "Distinguished Speakers" series which has been met with great success. They have hosted such speakers as the State Treasurer, State Comptroller, State Commissioners and members of the legislature. Please visit our website for more information on membership and contacts if you are interested in participating or call the office and ask for the President's contact information.

2002 Gala Award Recipients

The Special Projects Committee of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission met and selected the 2002 Gala Awards Recipients. The committee is made up of Commissioners Efrain Rosado, Maritza Tiru, Hector Robles and Manuel Garcia. This committee is staffed by the agency's Executive Director, Fernando Betancourt and its Special Projects Director, Lucy Goicoechea-Hernandez.

The winners for this year are as follows:

Ms. Alma Maya, Latina Citizen of the Year. Ms. Maya is the Executive Director of ASPIRA of Connecticut which is headquartered in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The Latino Citizen of the Year is Attorney Rafael Santiago of Robinson and Cole. Attorney Santiago is a founding member of the Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association, is a past President of the National Hispanic Bar Association and was recognized as one of the 100 most influential Hispanics in the United States by Hispanic Magazine.

Promesa Youth Latina Award winner is Ms. Shakira Ramos. Ms. Ramos is a recent graduate in Engineering from Trinity College in Hartford and is employed by United Technologies Corp. While at Trinity, Ms. Ramos distinguished herself by heading a number of college organizations, mentoring students and still maintaining a high grade point average with her studies.

Promesa Youth Latino Award winner is Mr. Gilberto Rosario. Mr. Rosario distinguished himself early by graduating from Hartford Public High School, enrolling at Manchester Community College and taking the initiative to lead other students in developing their leadership skills. He is currently a student at Central Connecticut State University.

The Community Service Award recipient is Hogar Crea. This organization has been in existence for over 20 years, began in Puerto Rico and is now internationally recognized for its substance abuse programs' success rate. Their offices are headquartered in the Parkville area of Hartford. Their executive director, Mr. Edwin Pacheco received the award on behalf of the organization and its President, Gualberto Santiago and his wife plan to attend the event.

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission held a joint workshop in collaboration with the Federal Department of Labor Women's Bureau on Wednesday, June 12, 2002 at the YWCA of the Hartford region.

The purpose of the two hour workshop was to obtain information from the Immigrant and Refugee Women population in the state in order to determine where they were lacking access to much-needed services. We had representatives from the Boston and Washington, D.C. offices of the Department of Labor as well as the Deputy Mayor of the City of Hartford. There were members of the staff from the State Commissions including Attorney Natasha Pierre of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and two of their interns. Community agencies who participated included the Community Health Council, Urban League of Greater Hartford, YWCA Hartford Region and the State Department of Administrative Services Procurement Division.

There were representatives from state agencies that work on a day to day basis with this population and they had brought at least two clients to participate in the workshop. There was a representative from the City of Hartford's Economic and Community Development Office who spoke about their first time homebuyers program called HouseHartford. She got the participants excited about the possibility of acquiring a new home with the help of the City. She will be one of the persons that will present at the follow up session which is targeted for November of 2002.

This workshop was well-attended and we received a great deal of positive feedback from those who participated. The date for the November follow up is Thursday, November 21, 2002 at the Legislative Office Building. Please share this information with those you think may benefit from participating and contact the office at 860-240-8330 to obtain information about the exact location as those plans are being finalized now. You may also visit our website at www.cga.state.ct.us/lprac for more information.

Little Known Facts

Did you know that it was a Governor from Puerto Rico who came to the United States and colonized the State of Florida? His name was Juan Ponce DeLeon and he made the trip looking for the eternal Fountain of Youth back in 1577. Florida was subsequently ceded to the United States by Spain in 1819, over three centuries later. But this information is not included in the history class lectures about the discovery of the Americas.

Did you know also that many of the state names in the United States are derived from Spanish names. For example, California-the Hot Land, Arizona, the Dry Land, Florida, Land of the Flowers, Montana, the Mountainous Land and Colorado, the Red Land. Share this information with your children and loved ones as this are....little know but true facts!

Latino History Corner



LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

**United States Representative
Democrat of California**

*One Hundred Third - One Hundred Seventh Congresses
January 3, 1993 - Present*

Lucille Roybal-Allard was the first Mexican-American woman to be elected to the U.S. Congress. She was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1992 with more than sixty percent of the vote in the general election, and was reelected in 1994 with eighty-one percent of the vote. Lucille Roybal-Allard was born in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles County, California on June 12, 1941. Her father [Edward R. Roybal](#) served in the U.S. House of Representatives for thirty years. In 1965 she graduated from California State University in Los Angeles. After working in the field of public relations and as a fund raising executive for the United Way, she was elected in 1986 by a wide margin to the California State Assembly, where she served for three terms. In the State legislature, Roybal-Allard was a strong advocate for women's rights and for environmental equity. She successfully led a campaign against the location of a toxic-waste incinerator in a low-income area within her district. Her leadership was commended by many groups including the California Sierra Club, which presented her with its first Legislative Environmental Achievement Award, and the California chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), which named her "Legislator of the Year" in 1991.

In Congress, Roybal Allard represents California's 33rd District, which has the largest Hispanic majority in the nation. Her district also has one of the lowest rates of voter participation, where less than one-fourth of those eligible to vote are registered. As a means of fostering citizenship education and voter participation, she sponsored a bill to allow non-profit, educational organizations to solicit federal funds to conduct citizenship workshops for immigrants and refugees.

Roybal-Allard is regarded as a strong supporter of social legislation, particularly in the fields of jobs, health care, education, housing, women's rights, and the environment. In the 103rd Congress, she served on the Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs Committee; and on the Small Business Committee. In the 104th Congress, she serves on the House Committee on Budget, and on the House Banking and Financial Services Committee, where she has seats on the Housing Subcommittee and the Domestic and International Monetary Policy Subcommittee.

Latinos Breaking Barriers Conference

*by Lucy Goicoechea-Hernández
Special Projects Director*

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission was approached by the Department of Social Services Bureau of Rehabilitation Services in 2000 in order to discuss the possibility of holding a conference on Latinos with Disabilities. After two or three meetings, the LPRAC Executive Director was convinced that

such a conference would be very beneficial to the Latino community. He assigned staff to begin working in collaboration with DSS staff along with staff from the Office of Protection and Advocacy, Department of Mental Retardation, Padres Abriendo Puertas and the Hartford Association for Retarded Citizens to develop such a conference.

On Friday, May 3, 2002, the fruit of labor of these combined talented staffs gave way to an outstanding conference on Latinos with Disabilities entitled Latinos Breaking Barriers. The workshops held covered such topics as the Americans with Disabilities Act, SSI/SSDI rules and regulations, transitioning from school to work and cultural awareness.

The agencies that were responsible for organizing this event realized that the services currently being provided to Latino persons with disabilities were not readily available nor was the community in some cases aware of what those services are. This first of its kind conference helped to publicize some of these programs and helped to educate many of the families and professionals present to the variety of services and agencies providing them that are available.

The keynote speaker was outstanding. He drove for over 14 hours to get to the location from Pennsylvania despite his own disabilities. He is a diminutive gentleman

who towers above any one of us with his eloquence, first hand knowledge of the challenges faced by persons with disabilities and charismatic way of delivering his message to an audience. He quickly won over the crowd with his stories of his youth, attending school and letting his mom cater

to him when he got home from school though he could fend for himself through the guidance he received at school. He reveled in telling the stories one after another and the audience ate it up and seemed to

move closer to him yearning for more.

The conference was so successful that the committee has already begun preparations for the second one to be held in 2004. During the final discussion late in the afternoon, a series of outcomes were discussed to be presented at the next conference. The development of a website is one of the ideas that was suggested at the brainstorming session held in the final hour of the conference from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. In addition, many of the social workers in the room felt that it would be helpful to have a resource manual identifying the various services available so that they would not have to be looking through bits and pieces of paper where often they keep a number and name that has been quickly jotted down.

One exciting outcome of the conference was the commitment expressed on the part of the administrators from the organizing agencies who expressed their sincere desire to look into providing funding and additional resources wherever possible to assist in better serving Latinos with Disabilities throughout the State of Connecticut.



L-R - Hiram Zayas, Keynote Speaker and Georgina Felix, Padres Abriendo Puertas



L-R - Fernando Betancourt, Exec. Dir. LPRAC; Eddie A. Perez, Hartford Mayor; Carlos Vazquez, Chairman, LPRAC; Werner Oyanadel, Leg. Analyst, LPRAC.



Staff of Department of Social Services' Bureau of Rehab Services, Office of Protection and Advocacy, Department of Mental Retardation, Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission, Hartford Association for Retarded Citizens and Padres Abriendo Puertas who comprised the Planning Committee.



L-R - Hiram Zayas, Keynote Speaker; Ada Suarez, from the Office of Protection and Advocacy

Continued from page 2

nity Policing initiative in Washington, D.C. for his work in community policing with The Hartford Police Department. I represented the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission at the National Puerto Rican Coalition Conference which was held in April in Puerto Rico along with Commissioners Maritza Tirú and Ramón Arroyo.

We have many events coming up this fall. Events such as our Fifth Annual Gala

Continued from page 1

ference to formally release the study for this year. We have added additional features including the opinions of our youth specific to teen risk behaviors.

We continue our work with the Reflecting CT/Reflejando a ConneCTicut initiative and its partners the Permanent Community on the Status of Women, African American Affairs Commission and the National Council for Community and Justice in ensuring that adequate representation is found within the various state boards and commissions as well as municipal boards and commission and now, also, corporate boards in collaboration with the State Treasurer's Office.

I am very pleased with the work of the agency and under my watch, have been able to involve myself more in the workshops and conferences organized by the staff. The Board itself continues to grow and demonstrates its commitment to the work of the organization in attending the monthly meetings and holding their respective committee meetings to make the decision required to continue the body of work we have been entrusted. Our Toastmasters Club has also been very successful and continues to draw more and more members. Please visit the website for the list of

Awards Banquet in September, the release of our socio economic study in October, our first ever Latino Summit on HIV/AIDS in November and our second Latino Leadership Summit which will be held in December in collaboration with Leadership Greater Hartford.

I look forward to greeting many of you at our many events and thank every one of you for your continued support and participation. Your strong commitment is what makes our agency the success it continues to be.



Commissioner Raúl Rodríguez (center) and other members of the LPRAC Toastmasters Club at the 2002 Speakers Competition.

dates for their Distinguished Speakers series.

I am looking forward to continued success this coming Fall with the first ever 800+ Gala Awards Banquet, our first ever Latino Summit on HIV/AIDS, the two forums targeted for October and November by the Reflecting CT/Reflejando a ConneCTicut initiative, the release of our third Socio Economic Study and with the second Latino Leadership Development Summit. I look forward to greeting many of you at the many events we have upcoming and thank you in advance for your continued support and participation. It is because of you that we have been as successful as we have been this past year and I

Please participate in our Toastmasters Club which meets twice per month and visit our website at www.cga.state.ct.us/lprac. Again, thank you for your support!

Hasta la Próxima.

Fernando Betancourt

commend you for your continued commitment.

Cordially,

Carlos Vázquez

Latino Summit-HIV/AIDS

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Health's Latino HIV/AIDS Strategy (LHAS) and the Ryan White HIV Care Program, is co-sponsoring a Latino Summit on HIV/AIDS. The one day conference will take place on Friday, November 15, 2002 at the Sheraton Hotel in East Hartford. It will begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 4:00 p.m. For information on registration or directions, please contact Moraima Gutiérrez at the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission. The number is 860-240-8330.

We look forward to greeting you there that day.

Legislative Update

by Werner Oyanadel

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC) advocated for a total of 10 separate bills during the session that ended on May 8, 2002. Of the 10 bills we advocated for a total of 3 passed the legislature. We will continue to work on those that failed this time around and feel proud to report that 3 of them survived. We supported legislation in the areas of economic development, democracy, education and environmental issues. We also worked on legislation judicial and health issues as well.

We shall, however, continue to focus on all socio-economic areas that affect our community and hope to tap on your expertise in any of these areas. Furthermore, we would be honored if you would be willing to testify on behalf of our body of legislation when it becomes available at the beginning of 2003. Please contact me at (860) 240-0097 if you would like to add your name to our Commission's e-mail **Testimony List**.



Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Fifth Annual Gala Awards Banquet - September 2002

Release of our Socio Economic Study - October 2002.

HIV Aids Summit - November 15, 2002 - Ramada,
Meriden, CT

Latina Leadership Summit - December 4, 2002

For more information, please visit our website at
www.cga.state.ct.us/lprac.

THE LATINO & PUERTO RICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION Co-Sponsored Events Upcoming Activities

SAVE THE DATE

Fifth Annual Gala Awards Banquet

Saturday, September 28, 2002

Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, Connecticut

For More Information, Please contact:

The LPRAC Office at 860-240-8330

A special thank you to Moraima Gutiérrez for the photographs used throughout this newsletter, Fernando Betancourt for co-editing and Werner Oyanadel for his technical assistance.

LPRAC's newsletter is published quarterly. Comments and questions may be sent to: Lucy Goicoechea-Hernández
18-20 Trinity Street, Hartford, CT 06106 or e-mail lucy.hernandez@po.state.ct.us